Women's Emergency Housing Coalition

AT THE END OF THE ROPE

A STUDY OF WOMEN'S EMERGENCY HOUSING NEEDS IN THE HALIFAX/DARTMOUTH AREA

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- Finally, to all the women who have found themselves "at the end of the rope" with no where to live and few resources to help them. Thank you for your strength and for talking to me and being part of this study and this struggle.

Cathy Mellett

THE END OF THE ROPE

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Definitions

For the purpose of this survey "serious housing problems" means:

A. Their accommodations have such poor physical standards as to endanger health or safety.

B. Their accommodations have such poor social standards as to be deemed dangerous to physical or mental health.

For the purpose of this survey "homeless women" are:

A. Women living in any temporary accommodation such as shelters, hotels/motels, or hostels.

B. Women living in sharing situations with friends or relatives i.e. doubling-up.

THE WOMEN'S EMERGENCY HOUSING COALITION

The Women's Emergency Housing Coalition is a group of individuals and agency representatives who are attempting to address the needs of women and children in the Halifax/Dartmouth area who are facing severe housing crises. The coalition was formed in April of 1982 and has continued to work to address the emergency housing needs of women and children.

Many concerned individuals, as well as people who work directly with women in housing crisis, are members of the coalition. Membership is open to any individual interested in addressing emergency housing issues. Staff of the city of Dartmouth social services, the city of Halifax social planning department, and the Children's aid society contribute their time and knowledge to the coalition.

Agencies who deal directly with women and their housing difficulties are represented on the coalition. These include:

A Woman's Place
The YWCA
Women's Employment Counselling Services
Access Housing Services
Dalhousie Legal Aid
Bryony House
Dartmouth Social Services
Metro Drug Dependency
Coverdale Trust

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INTRODUCTION

Early in 1982 concerned people and social service agencies formed the Women's Emergency Housing Coalition, because of their concern for the increasing number of women with children who were approaching social service agencies in serious housing crisis. These women who were approaching the service agencies in growing numbers did not qualify for any of the already existing emergency housing services available in the Halifax-Dartmouth area.

The focus of the coalition came directly out of the work experience of many of its members. The scenario they faced was this: if a woman with children did not have a place to stay (for the night) there was nowhere to refer her for safe, secure shelter. If she had absolutely no where to stay and was out on the street after dark, both the Dartmouth and Halifax police departments had the authority to sign her into one of the downtown hotels for the night and to put her in touch with a social worker. If a woman who is experiencing a severe housing crisis is eligible for municipal social assistance or can be evaluated by a municipal case worker as being in extreme distress then, again, the municipality can place her and her family in temporary accommodations in one of three hotels in Dartmouth or Halifax. Due to problems of eligibility, this cannot always be effected by the social service case worker.

During periods of housing shortages and increasing costs many people feel the difficulties of finding housing. Some segments of society suffer from housing difficulties more than others. The numbers of women with severe housing problems approaching the service agencies led them to suspect that in Halifax-Dartmouth the group in most need has grown to be women, especially women who have the sole care of children, or who are on fixed or low incomes.

One compounding factor is the serious shortage of public housing in the metro area. Traditionally, public housing has provided subsidized housing to the segment of the population in greatest need. In December 1982, 325 eligible families were on the waiting list for public housing in Dartmouth. In Halifax, 663 families wait for an opening to occur.[1] A second compounding factor is that there is no emergency housing facility in the area to assist in the immediate housing crisis for single parent women.

Although there are several resources available to single women because of demand and a move towards more settled residences in all of the city hostels it is still extremely difficult for single women, who are facing an emergency housing problem, to find a space in the city. In a study undertaken in 1981 by the Association of Supportive Services for women, six agencies cited an average of 43 women between the ages of 16 and 25 looking for accommodations in an average month.[2]

The housing resources available to women in the Halifax-Dartmouth area are outlined as follows:

The YWCA: Can take only single women only with direct referrals from agencies. They have no facilities to house women with children. They are attempting to establish a stable atmosphere for their longer term residents and therefore have very limited emergency facilities. The YWCA has 40 hostel beds available on a nightly, weekly and monthly basis.

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1. Monthly statistical reports are available to the public from both Dartmouth and Halifax Housing Authorities.

2. For a more detailed study of the emergency housing needs of single women refer to a 1981 report available from the Association for Women's Residential Facilities--1546 Barrington Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 1Z3.

BETHANY HOUSE: Is a maternity home run by the Salvation Army. They take only women who are in the late months of pregnancy and attempt to provide a stable atmosphere for the expectant mothers. They cannot take women with only housing emergencies.

HOME OF THE GUARDIAN ANGEL: Is a maternity home; no emergency accommodations can be provided.

BRYONY HOUSE: Is a transition house that shelters women and their children who come from situations of family violence. Because of the difficulty of finding affordable housing in the city for mother-headed low-income families, they have had difficulties moving women through the shelter out into the community. They have no room for strictly emergency housing.

HALIFAX YOUTH HOSTEL: Have limited facilities for family accommodations and do not remain open during the day. While they have taken in women in extreme housing emergencies their mandate is to provide a reasonable accommodation for travellers from outside the Halifax area. They have a room charge of $8.00 per night per person.

This sketch of facilities in the area illustrates that there are extremely limited resources for single women needing emergency shelter, and no beds at all for women with children.

In May 1982 the Women's Emergency Housing Coalition undertook to research the situation. Funding for this was received from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for a ten-week project, which was undertaken during September and October of 1982. This report is based on information gathered during that project. It strongly indicates the need for an emergency housing facility for women.

METHODOLOGY

There were three main components to the research project. Phase One looked into the situation on a Canada-wide scale, documenting facilities and services in other Canadian cities. Letters were sent out to women's shelters listed in the directory of Women's Resources published by the Secretary of State (1979). Because of the date of publication and the likelihood that shelters had been opened since 1979, self-addressed, stamped envelopes, and a request for names of other shelters, were sent along with the questionnaires. Another letter, requesting information on shelters in their area, was mailed to 53 women's resource centers across Canada. The response to the letters did provide some additional information on shelters (the return rate was 17%). (See Appendix 1).

The final mailing list consisted of 15 emergency shelters across Canada which were sent a questionnaire (see Appendix 2). Eleven shelters returned the completed questionnaire (response rate of 78.8%). Information received from two shelters could not be tabulated in the questionnaire format.

The questionnaire sent to the 15 Canadian shelters was designed to provide information on funding, staffing, problems and use patterns of the shelters.

Phase Two consisted of sending questionnaires to a variety of community and government-based organizations which work with women in the Halifax-Dartmouth area. These agencies had direct access to information on women's housing needs. The questionnaires were mailed to 13 agencies, with self-addressed, stamped envelope and explanatory cover letter (see Appendix 3). This letter was supplemented by a visit by the researcher and received 100% response.

The questionnaire sought to establish how many women were approaching the agencies with serious housing problems, with specific questions about the percentages and numbers of women they worked with who had serious housing problems or who could be considered homeless.[1]

A second form requesting the agencies to record all contacts with women with housing problems for a specific period (September 13 - October 8, 1982) was sent out with the questionnaire (see Appendix 4). This aspect of the study met with the most difficulty. Many of these agencies face staffing limitations, causing a very limited response. Of the 13 agencies completing questionnaires, five (38.4%) completed the more detailed housing contact form.

Phase Three included interviews with women who had found themselves homeless. A basic background sheet was completed by the woman and then an interview was recorded (see Appendix 5). The interview questions were directed at the circumstances around the "homeless" situation, attempts at finding accommodations, and the resulting effects on the women and their families.

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1. It was recognized that these questions cannot give exact counts of homeless women and their families in the Halifax area, because to discern if a woman is in contact with more than one of the agencies surveyed would take a more detailed and extensive survey technique.

RESULTS

PHASE ONE: Literature search and Cross-Canada Survey

A search was conducted for information already published on women and emergency housing. Most useful was information published by municipalities and others already involved in operating emergency shelters. Specifically, the City of Toronto has carried out studies on the needs and effectiveness of their shelter systems, and presents the most thorough statistical information on use patterns. In addition, a visit was made by the researcher to a new women's shelter established in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in July 1982.

The City of Toronto appears to have one of the largest and most advanced systems of shelters and hostels in English-speaking Canada, having been dealing with the problem of housing emergencies for a longer period of time. All approved hostels and shelters are registered with City Homes and standards are controlled under this central organization, although funding comes from many sources. In 1981, in the Toronto area, there were eleven shelters with 380 beds operating for women and families in need of housing. Sixty-five of these beds were specifically for women facing family violence (transition houses). The remaining beds were to meet basic shelter needs. The largest of these shelters is the "Dundas Street Family Residence," operating by the Department of Social Services of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. That facility has 125 beds and is open to families and single women who are in financial need.

Between 1980 and 1981 the residence reported an increase of 42.7% in its overall use. Their Case Composition statistics noted a significant increase in the numbers of women and children using the shelter.[1] Even with the 380 beds available, in the face of these increases and similiar demand on other shelters, a January 1982 report from the Social Planning Department of the Municipality of Toronto recommended an increase in the number of hostel beds available in the area.[2]

The visit to the Saskatoon emergency shelter "A Room of One's Own" was a very important information source, although they had just opened in July of 1982 and so had very little statistical information. Again, they had the support of all three government levels in building and staff funding. The facility had 16 beds and already, in the first month, they found they had to turn away as many as two women a night because the facility was not large enough. "A Room of One's Own" is the only facility of its type in Saskatchewan. It was established, specifically to meet the emergency housing shelter needs of women and their children. The ongoing use and demand for the services of "A Room of One's Own" since July 1982 has verified the need for such a facility in Saskatoon, a center of 154,210, with a vacancy rate in October 1982 of 1.0% (down from 2.0% in April 1982). During the early months of 1983 their staff will be undertaking a needs study to determine if a larger facility is necessary. Their present objective is to enlarge to 25-30 beds in 1983.

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1. Case Composition

	1980	1981
Men	286	135
Women	1,215	2,516
Children	1,118	1,556
Total	2,670	4,207

From: Mrs. C. Joss Superintendent; Dundas Street Family Residence

2. City of Toronto Planning: Development Department, Policy Section
CONFRONTING THE CRISIS A Review of City Housing Policy 1976-81, p.38

In corresponding with various centres across Canada, four municipalities felt extreme need for some sort of emergency housing in their areas. These centres were St. John's, Newfoundland; Victoria, B.C.; Red Deer, Alberta and Winnipeg, Manitoba. These centers were all experiencing a noticable increase in the need for emergency housing for women and children and had no resource in place to respond adequately to that need. These cities are urban centres with larger rural areas feeding into them; population shifts force these cities to deal with the economic difficulties of the whole area.

The addresses for the national survey were acquired from the Directory of Women's Services published by Secretary of State in 1979. Because of the nature of the directory it was difficult to distinguish between women's shelters dealing strictly with women in violent home situations (transition houses) and ones dealing partly or totally with women in housing crisis. The questionnaire was sent out to a variety of facilities; their mandate will be distinguished as either a Transition House (T), hostel (H) or combined (T & H) in the data. The agencies are listed in charts by number and city; for reference purposes the following are the agencies indicated:

1. Edmonton Women's Shelter (T & H)
2. Community Residence, Thunderbay, Ont. (T & H)
3. Calgary Emergency Shelter (T & H)
4. Interim Place, Port Credit, Ont. (T & H)
5. St. Thomas YWCA Emergency Shelter, Ont. (H)
6. Vernon, B.C. Shelter (T)
7. Women's Emergency Shelter, Woodstock, Ont. (T & H)
8. Victoria Women's Shelter (T)
9. Woman's Place, St. Catherines, Ont. (T & H)
10. A Woman's Place, St. Catherines, Ont. (T & H)
11. Nellies, Toronto (H)

The survey was intended to gain statistical information; questions were structured so as to establish the size of the facility, the demand for services, their adequacy, services offered and effectiveness.

In comparing the data from the completed surveys one is able to note the similarities and differences amongst the various facilities in terms of funding, staffing, vacancies, and services.

I.a. THE NUMBER OF BEDS AVAILABLE IN THE EMERGENCY SHELTERS STUDIED

It can be derived from the data that all (100%) of the facilities housed women with children. None of them (0%) accepted men. Sixty-seven per cent (67%) of the facilities accepted single women as well as those with children.

The capacity of the shelters varied from 10 beds to 30 beds, with the average being approximately 16 beds.

TABLE 1 - Capacity of the shelters

AGENCY	NO. OF BEDS	SERVES FAMILIES?	SERVES SINGLE WOMEN?
1. Edmonton	15	yes (7 families)	no
2. Thunderbay	n/a	yes	yes (4)
3. Calgary	30	yes	yes
4. Port Credit	18	yes	no
5. St. Thomas	10	yes	no
6. Vernon	14	yes	yes
7. Woodstock	10	yes	yes
8. Victoria	12	yes	yes
9. London	14	yes	yes
10. St. Catherines	15	yes (8 families)	no
11. Toronto	29	yes	yes

I.b. AVERAGE NUMBERS OF WOMEN WHO UTILIZE THE SHELTERS IN A MONTH

Of the four shelters that serve only women with children, the average number of family groups using the shelter in one month is 18. (20, 20, 16, 8)

TABLE 2 - monthly numbers accommodated

AGENCY	NUMBERS PER MONTH
1. Edmonton	18-21 families
2. Thunderbay	12 families (includes single women)
3. Calgary	80 or more people (includes singles)
4. Port Credit	16 families
5. St. Thomas	8 families
6. Vernon	18 families (includes singles)
7. Woodstock	12 families (includes singles)
8. Victoria	25-30 families (includes singles)
9. London	15 families (includes singles)
10. St. Catherines	20 families
11. Toronto	138 people (includes singles)

The numbers of people using the facility in a month corresponds directly with the number of beds available and the average length of stay.

Note: That figure does not specify the numbers of children housed.

TABLE 3 --Comparison of monthly numbers to beds and length of stay

AGENCY	average # in month	# of beds	average length of stay
1.	18-21 families	15	21 days
2.	12 families	n/a	15 days
3.	80 plus people	30	6 days
4.	16 families	18	14 days
5.	8 families	10	21 days
6.	18 families	14	7 days
7.	12 families	10	n/a
8.	25-30 families	12	21 days
9.	15 families	14	14 days
10.	20 families	15	10 days
11.	138 people	29	7-14 days

It should be noted that exact numbers of people (including children) were not given in much of the statistical information but rather calculated in families per month. What can be noted is that all the facilities appear to be operating at capacity. The mean stay is 14 days. The mode is also 14 days and the range is from 1 to 30 days stay in the shelters. The shelters indicated that the length of stay often depended on the space available and the housing situation in the city at the time of the families arrival.

I.c. DO YOU TURN WOMEN AWAY??

Ten of the eleven shelters (90.9%) indicated that they have to turn women away on occasion, for many reasons. The primary reason was lack of beds. The shelters in Calgary and Toronto turned away the largest numbers of women. The second reason for turning women away was that they did not meet the mandate or requirements of the shelter. For the transition houses, this meant that the women had only housing needs and did not come from violent home situations. Two of the hostels reported some difficulties in accepting women with severe psychiatric problems, partly due to staffing limitations.

The Calgary women's shelter reported that they turn away more women than they are able to take in! Seven of the eleven shelters reported with a quantitative description of the numbers of women they have to refuse.

AGENCY	NUMBERS OF WOMEN TURNED AWAY/PER WEEK
3. Calgary	25 per week
5. St. Thomas	1 per week
6. Vernon	2 per week
8. Victoria	1 per week
9. London	5 per week
10. St. Catherines	5 per week
11. Toronto	35 per week

I.d. IS THERE A NOTICEABLE SEASONAL DEMAND?

None of the shelters perceived a great change in demand according to season. Three shelters noted that in the summer the demand tended to increase to some extent but had no statistical evidence to verify their assumption. It can be assumed that women are consistently seeking emergency shelter throughout the calendar year with only minor fluctuations in demand.

I.e. STRUCTURE OF THE FUNDING OF THE FACILITY

As indicated on the chart 73% of the agencies obtained part of their funding through a per diem rate and all but one had direct government involvement in the funding in addition to private fund raising. When per diem rates were given a dollar figure it ranged from $17.65 to $26.68 with the average being $20.00.

TABLE 4 -- Funding structure

Agency	perdeim	anual govn't grant	annual private grant	daily room charge	private fund raising	united way	other
1. Edmonton		✓					30% raise in [illegible]
2. Thunderbay	✓						municipality
3. Calgary		✓			✓	✓	
4. Port Credit	✓	✓		✓	✓		
5. St. Thomas				✓	✓		Yuca capital
6. Vernon	✓	✓			✓	✓	
7. Woodstock	✓			✓	✓	✓	
8. Victoria	✓						
9. London	✓				✓		
10. St. Cath.	✓		✓				
11. Toronto	✓				✓		Interest

Among the facilities who charged a daily rate for the room the charges ranged from five to fifteen dollars a day.

TABLE 5 --Daily room charge rates

AGENCY	CHARGE PER DAY
4. Port Credit	$5-$15 (based on ability to pay)
5. St. Thomas	$5
7. Woodstock	$10

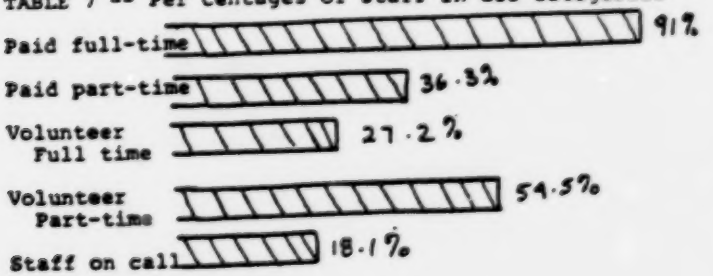
I.f. STAFFING

All shelters except for the YWCA Hostel-St. Thomas felt it necessary to have paid, full-time staff. Eighty-two percent of the facilities use both paid employees and volunteers, and indicated that the volunteers often provide support services that could not be made available in any other way.

TABLE 6 -- Staffing Structure

AGENCY	paid full time	paid part time	volunteer full time	volunteer part time	staff on call
1. Edmonton	✓		✓		
2. Thunderbay	✓				
3. Calgary	✓	✓		✓	
4. Port Credit	✓	✓	✓		
5. St. Thomas		✓		✓	
6. Vernon	✓	✓	✓	✓	
7. Woodstock	✓			✓	✓
8. Victoria	✓				✓
9. London	✓				
10. St. Cath.	✓			✓	
11. Toronto	✓			✓	

TABLE 7 -- Per Centages of staff in all categories



I.g. HOURS OF OPERATION

Eighty-two percent of the facilities indicated they were in operation 24 hours a day and handled emergencies 24 hours a day. The other 18% operated from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. daily but also had staff on call 24 hours in case of emergency.

I.h. OTHER PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN USING THE FACILITIES

The questionnaire sent to the facilities contained a check list of problems other than immediate housing concerns which might be presented by client women. Most shelters indicated that the women are undergoing marital problems (this may be because most hostels are located as part of a transition house facility). Ninety-one percent see employment, childcare and legal conflicts as contributing to the women's crisis. Eighty-two percent of the agencies are also frequently presented with mental health issues, and 82% become involved in social assistance advocacy. Forty-five percent of the facilities saw lack of assertiveness as a problem with their clients. Other problems mentioned included health, drug and alcohol counselling.

TABLE 8 -- Nature of other problems expressed by the women in the shelters

AGENCY	employment	mental health	Social Ass. advocacy	child care	Assertiveness	legal	marital
1. Edmonton	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
2. Thunderbay	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
3. Calgary	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
4. Port Credit	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
5. St. Thomas			✓	✓		✓	✓
6. Vernon	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
7. Woodstock	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
8. Victoria	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9. London	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10. St. Cath.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11. Toronto	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	91%	82%	82%	91%	45%	91%	100%

When asked if the shelter had any internal immediate resources to deal with these problems, the following responses were given:

TABLE 9 -- Resources provided by the shelters

AGENCY	Any Resources?	Specify
1. Edmonton	yes	a trained follow-up worker
2. Thunderbay	yes	social worker/counseller/ resources
3. Calgary	yes	counselling by trained staff
4. Port Credit	n/a	n/a
5. St. Thomas	no	n/a
6. Vernon	no	referr to other agencies
7. Woodstock	no	referr to other agencies
8. Victoria	no	referr to other agencies
9. London	yes	pamphlets/books/ other agencies
10. St. Cath.	yes	counselling and advocacy
11. Toronto	no	referr to other agencies

Five shelters do not have resources to deal with those problems but do refer to other agencies. Five shelters have resources which vary from trained follow-up workers and counselling staff to pamphlets and books available to the women.

Other groups or agencies most frequently used to provide support services were legal aid, children's aid, mental health services, doctors, police, church groups, women's organizations, and the services of human resources or social services. Other agencies mentioned were V.O.N., native councils, alcohol and drug centres, crisis intervention teams, single-parent centres and the Salvation Army.

However, 92% of the shelters indicated that these agencies were inadequate for the needs of the women. Although they used the services available to assist some women when possible there was a general feeling that not enough services were available to meet the pressing need.

Finally, when asked where the women go if the shelter cannot accommodate them, some shelters replied that these women turn to friends, go to motels, stay at home, go to crisis centres, or to the YWCA if single or to hospitals or anywhere they can find a bed. Forty-five percent (45%) responded that they were not the only emergency facility in the city and women could sometimes be sheltered at another centre.

PHASE TWO -- Questionnaire to Halifax/Dartmouth Agencies

The second phase of the study was a three-part questionnaire sent to a variety of community and government-based agencies serving metro Halifax-Dartmouth. Sections I and II contained questions designed to establish the numbers and ages of women utilizing these agencies, housing problems they were experiencing and services/ resources available.

Section III of the local survey sought the agencies' opinions concerning the establishing of an emergency shelter based on their dealings with women in the community. The remaining questions dealt with a hypothetical shelter model, what services the agency would expect it to provide, what services the agency might provide to it, and where a shelter should be established.

The agencies which completed the study are listed by number in the data charts, as follows:

1. The YWCA
2. Women's Information Resource and Referral Service
3. Spryfield Single Parents Centre
4. Dalhousie Legal Aid
5. Coverdale Trust (Services for Women in conflict with the law)
6. Services of Support (for Single Parents)
7. Women's Employment Counselling Services
8. Neighbourhood Society (Emergency Shelter for Men)
9. Halifax Youth Hostel
10. Bryony House
11. Children's Aid Society
12. Help Line
13. Dartmouth Community Services

PHASE TWO -- SECTION I

II.a. AGES OF THE WOMEN WITH WHICH THE AGENCY DEALS

When asked age categories and percentage of women in each, the following data was generated:

TABLE 10 -- Age of women clients served by the agencies

AGENCY	women 16-25	women 26-40	other ages
1. YWCA	73%	23%	4%
2. W.I.I.R.S.	12%	80%	7%
3. Spryfield S.P.	100%	0%	--
4. Dal. legal aid	65%	35%	--
5. Coverdale	95%	5%	--
6. S.O.S.	45%	55%	--
7. Women's employment	35%	60%	5%
8. Neighbourhood Soc.	n/a	n/a	--
9. Youth hostel	80%	20%	--
10. Bryony house	27%	55%	18%
11. Children's aid	20%	80%	--
12. Help line	20%	35%	n/a
13. Dartmouth C.S.	40%	40%	20%

Seven of the 12 agencies (58%) answered that 100% of the women they dealt with were sixteen and over. Four (33%) answered that the majority were sixteen or over. Only one agency (Children's Aid Society) dealt with more female clients under 16 than 16 and over.

The graph indicates that the two main client age groups are women 16-25 and 26-40. Only a small percentage of clients were either older or younger than these groups. One must take into account the nature of the agencies asked to complete the survey. As many of these agencies deal directly with women of employable or child-raising years, this will be reflected in the ages of the women who contact them.[1]

II.b. AGENCY EVALUATION OF THE HOUSING SITUATION FOR THEIR CLIENTS

When asked if and when the housing situation had worsened for women, 12 of the 13 agencies (96.17%) indicated some degree of worsening in the last two years.

Some agency comments:

- housing is getting so bad for women that even "established" women are being affected by the rent increases and low vacancy rate.
- the largest concern was a serious shortage of affordable housing for low- and fixed-income women.
- landlord discrimination against women and children and social assistance recipients were common reasons given for the increasingly poor housing situation for these women.
- three of the agencies indicated that the problem intensifies during the winter months and predicted the winter of 1982-83 to be the worst yet.
- from various agencies' experience, summer was the period when the situation eases somewhat due to students leaving the city; clients find it easier to double-up two families in inadequate accommodations in summer.

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1. A study was undertaken by Halifax Social Planning over the summer of 1982 concerning the housing needs of social assistance clients. Although this study has not yet been released, indications are that the major group of social assistance recipients in serious housing difficulties are single parent women. The report should be available through Halifax Social Planning-Research and Development early in 1983.

II.c. RESOURCES AGENCIES HAVE, WITH WHICH TO TREAT EMERGENCY HOUSING PROBLEMS

When asked to specify the resources they had to deal with the housing problems of client women, 23% of the agencies responded that they had no resources. Sixty-two percent (62%) responded that they had no resources but tried to refer women to appropriate agencies. The exception was the YWCA, which has 40 beds available for temporary accommodation but cannot accept children. They also prefer clients who are referred from other agencies to establish a more stable atmosphere in the residence. The City of Dartmouth Community Service offered direct services as well as referrals; these services included a worker to assist with housing searches, a homemakers service and a 24-hour emergency shelter, when necessary, in Dartmouth hotels.

The agencies which made referrals listed the following resources:

Women's Information Resource and Referral Service; Salvation Army; The YWCA; Bethany Home; Bryony House; the apartment section of the Newspaper; Dalhousie Legal Aid; church groups; The Halifax and Dartmouth Housing Authorities; friends and family; and Social Services.

II.d. OTHER NEEDS OF WOMEN PERCEIVED BY THE AGENCIES

All of the agencies (100%) perceived adequate, affordable housing to be the largest problem facing the women who are their client group. Seventy percent (70%) of the agencies felt that some sort of education and employment training was essential. Forty-six percent (46%) also stressed that women with children lacked appropriate day-care options for their children. Forty-six percent (46%) mentioned financial support and community resources as being an essential need of these women in crisis situations.

Other needs listed by the agencies included: counselling; skills in home management; transportation and assistance in housing searches; motivation; health care and a supportive environment.

PHASE TWO - SECTION II

II.e. NUMBERS OF WOMEN CONTACTING AGENCIES WITH SEVERE HOUSING DIFFICULTIES

Three questions were asked to estimate the number of women with serious housing problems, the numbers of those women who were "homeless" in a given month, and the numbers of those women who were "homeless" women who had children in their care. Statistical information from the agencies was compiled from the reports of July and August of 1982, where available, and yearly statistics where July and August were not available. Definitions of "Women in serious housing difficulty" and "homeless women" were presented to the agencies as follows:

For the purpose of this survey "serious housing problems" means:

A. their accommodations have such poor physical standards as to endanger health or safety.

B. their accommodations have such poor social standards as to be deemed dangerous to physical or mental health.

For the purpose of this survey "homeless women" are:

A. women living in any temporary accommodation such as shelters, hotels/motels, or hostels.

B. women living in sharing situations with friends or relatives ie: doubling-up.

Statistics from the City of Halifax Department of Social Services were not included in this survey because of the likelihood of overlap. Large segment of the women who deal with the Halifax-based agencies are also on the case load of Social Services. (Statistical information from Dartmouth Community services was included because they were the only Dartmouth-based organization available to study). Even with this adjustment, the data gathered does not give absolute numbers of women in housing crisis or homeless, but the information accurately reflects the number of contacts received by the agencies in a given month from women with housing problems and homeless. It is accurate enough to reflect a serious trend.

Data from the records of the agencies were as follows:

TABLE 11 -- Women with serious housing problems

AGENCY	% of women the agency serves in serious housing problems in an average month of 1982	# of women this represents
1. YWCA	n/a	20
2. W.I.I.R.S	n/a	6
3. Spryfield S.P.	50%	110
4. Dal.Legal Aid	20%	10-12
5. Coverdale	n/a	10-15
6. S.O.S.	30%	2-3
7. Women's Empl.	10%	3-5
8. Neighbourhood Soc.	100%	4
9. Youth hostel	n/a	n/a
10. Bryony House	100%	12-30
11. Children's Aid	10-15 %	32
12. Help line	4%	10
13. Dartmouth C.S.	50%	203
	TOTAL	422-553

- Numbers of women who contacted the agencies who were considered homeless -

TABLE 12 -- Numbers of women who contacted the agencies who were homeless -

AGENCY	% of women who had serious housing problems who fit the definition of homeless	#'s of women this represented in a given month
1. YWCA	n/a	n/a
2. W.I.I.R.S	100%	6
3. Spryfield S.P.	50%	2-3
4. Dal. legal aid	n/a	2
5. Coverdale	100%	10-15
6. S.O.S.	40%	1-2
7. Women's employment	50%	1-3
8. Neighbourhood Soc.	100%	4
9. Youth hostel	n/a	2
10. Bryony house	100%	12-30
11. Children's aid	12-18%	4-6
12. Help line	20%	2
13. Dartmouth C.S.	9.8%	20
	TOTAL	66-93

- The percentage of homeless women who had care of children -

TABLE 13 -- The percentage of homeless women who had care of children --

AGENCY	# of women who contacted them who were homeless	% of these women who had care of children
1. YWCA	n/a	n/a
2. W.I.I.R.S.	6	88%
3. Spryfield S.P.	2-3	100%
4. Dal. legal aid	2	95-100%
5. Coverdale	10-15	12%
6. S.O.S.	1-2	100%
7. Women's Employment	1-3	100%
8. Neighbourhood Soc.	4	50%
9. Youth Hostel	2	0%
10. Bryony house	12-30	76%
11. Children's aid	4-6	100%
12. Help line	2	n/a
13. Dartmouth C.S.	20	80%

From this data it is concluded that the majority of homeless women contacting the agencies also have the care of their children.

To summarize the data involving women who had serious housing difficulties and those who were homeless:

In 1982, the 13 agencies collectively received between 422 and 553 contacts a month from women who had serious housing problems. This represented between 4% and 100% of the client case of the agencies. (The percentage was dependent on the type of services the agency provided, and whether they dealt specifically with providing shelter or a variety of other services (e.g. Dalhousie Legal Aid)). The largest numbers of women who were classified as having serious housing problems were from the caseload of Dartmouth Social Services and reflects the economic situation of their client group. This data also tends to enforce the need perceived that the primary group of people experiencing the most serious housing crisis tends to be the single parent woman with children on social assistance or other fixed incomes.

Of those 422 to 553 monthly contacts, between, 66 and 93 were women who were considered to be homeless at the time of contact. This represents a total of 15% to 16.8% of the monthly contacts from women with housing problems. The range, depending on the agency and the types of services offered, was from 9.8% to 100% of the women contacting the agencies with housing difficulties.

In an average month of 1982, children were involved in 70% (45 to 63) of agency contacts with homeless women. The range, between 12% and 100%, is also dependent on the client group the agency primarily dealt with.

II.f. RESULTS OF THE IN-DEPTH HOUSING CONTACT REPORT FORM

A Housing Contact Report form was sent to all the agencies along with the questionnaire, on which agencies were to record actual calls and contacts from women experiencing serious housing problems during the study period (September 13th through October 8th, 1982). The forms included the date of contact, family type, specific housing concern, agency suggestions and resolution when known. Of the thirteen agencies completing the questionnaire, five filled out the Contact Report Form for a 38.4% response.

Four of these five agencies found during the study period that the numbers of women with serious housing problems were greater than they had reported from previous months on the questionnaire.

TABLE 14 -- Numbers of women who contacted the agencies with serious housing problems during the study period compared with the numbers from the questionaire

AGENCY	Questionaire	Study period Sept. 13/82 - Oct. 8/82
1. W.I.I.R.S.	6	12
2. S.O.S.	3	10
3. Women's employment	3	3
4. Youth hostel	2	4
5. Dartmouth C.S.	20	24
TOTALS	34	53

Of the 53 contacts reported in the Report Forms, 26.5% (14 families) had been in emergency facilities, and 73.5% (39 families) were doubling up with friends or family for some part of the study period. Of these 53 women, 71.7% (36 of 53) had children in their care, and 84.8% (45 of 53) were categorized as homeless. If statistics from Dartmouth Social Services are disaggregated, 72.4% (21 of 29) of the reported inquiries in Halifax were homeless.

II.g. FOLLOW-UP TO REFERRALS OF HOMELESS WOMEN

Referrals for homeless women were similiar to those for women with serious housing problems. They included city social service departments, Dalhousie Legal Aid, Helpline, the Halifax and Dartmouth Housing authorities, hostels, churches, the YWCA, Women's Information Resource & Referral, and the local paper for apartment listings. Sixty-two percent (62%) of agencies also follow-up their referrals, but only by attempting to keep in touch with the women. Dartmouth Social Services was advanced in this area: every person placed in temporary shelter must report daily to the offices for a housing search form, and those finding accommodations were visited by the homemakers service.

The inability of other agencies to keep in contact with the women who have approached them is a symptom of the very nature of their problem. They are "homeless", and as such, are transient: moving from one place to another in their search for permanent accommodations. Without a central registry or facility the agencies find it impossible to assist these women consistently or effectively.

PHASE TWO - SECTION III

II.h. AGENCIES' PERSPECTIVES ON THE NEED FOR AN EMERGENCY SHELTER FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Ninety-two percent (92%) of the 13 agencies indicated that an emergency shelter for women and children is a priority, rating it according to a choice of six categories:

1. essential immediately
2. essential
3. important
4. a future service
5. a long term goal or
6. other

All the agencies ranked the priority among the top three categories. Sixty-seven percent (67%) considered emergency shelter as "essential immediately."

II.i. PREFERRED LOCATION

The 13 agencies were asked where an emergency shelter should be established:

Central location near downtown Halifax (either North or South ends)	-- 69%
No preference	-- 15%
Spryfield	-- 8%
Dartmouth	-- 8%

Reasons given for central Halifax were numerous but revolved basically around availability of other support services such as good transportation, near schools, hospitals, day-cares, A Woman's Place and other services. The majority of agencies surveyed operate in central Halifax and this could have influenced their desire to have the shelter in close proximity.

II.j. ANTICIPATED EFFECTS OF ESTABLISHING A SHELTER

The agencies were asked what effect an emergency shelter might have on their ability to provide services to their clients. Most of the agencies replied that it would have a very positive effect, providing them with a safe, secure place to refer women.

When asked what resources the agency might provide to the shelter some of the responses were as follows: collaboration on staff training with Bryony House; providing information resources, employment counselling and assertiveness training from Women's Employment Counselling Services; counselling and legal services from Dalhousie Legal Aid; and the possibility of the use of day-care facilities and programs available through the YWCA. The types of responses by the agencies indicated their interest in pursuing the project. All the agencies interviewed indicated that they would refer clients to such a facility.

II.k. SERVICES THE SHELTER SHOULD PROVIDE

The types of services the agencies saw the shelter providing included the following:

- The basic provision of short term, safe accommodations for women and their children.
- All agencies saw the facility providing some food services or food preparation, child care, and assistance in locating permanent housing.
- Other suggested services included provision of information about job and educational opportunities; emotional support; legal aid; housing and social assistance advocacy; referral and follow-up to other agencies; health and nutritional education and some home management training.

All agencies indicated a desire not to have the shelter duplicate services already offered by existing agencies and community groups, but to have those resources used more effectively by referring women to them.

II.l. BENEFITS OF ESTABLISHING AN EMERGENCY SHELTER

Many agencies thought the establishment of an emergency shelter for women and their children would remove pressure from the agencies having to deal with the problem at the present time, allowing them to deal more effectively with the specific services they offer to women in the community. They also felt the shelter could provide the opportunity for women to leave a troubled home situation that was not yet violent. The shelter would provide a much safer environment than commercial accommodations for the women and children in crisis situations. All agencies emphasized that a shelter would fill a serious gap in the services available in the Metro Halifax/Dartmouth area.

PHASE THREE: THE WOMEN'S OWN WORDS

During the course of the study the researcher interviewed seven homeless women contacted through the participating agencies. From these interviews, two were selected because of the clarity and insight these women brought to their situation. "Beverly" and "Mary" expressed, in their interviews, factors that inhibit many women from finding a place to live. Their stories are extracted from tape recordings of the interviews.

BEVERLY

"Beverly" was interviewed on November 1, 1982. Like many women who find themselves homeless she just never thought this was going to happen to her. She and the interviewer met by chance at an agency because both were looking for information on the same afternoon. Often, one can meet homeless women only by chance because they have to be moving from one place to the next, or are out looking for a place to live.

Beverly is a young woman about nineteen years old, soon to become a single mother. In fact, Beverly is in her ninth month of pregnancy and the doctor says the baby is due in about a week. Until Friday, October 29, 1982, she had been living in a 30-unit apartment building/rooming house in Halifax. She had found it after a long search.

"I'd found this place so I could be settled. You know--have a place to bring the baby back to after I had it. I wanted to be settled so I could keep the baby--that's really important to me."

On Friday, October 29th, the new manager came around to all the rooms and gave verbal notice to vacate by the end of the weekend. Some people complained he couldn't do that. A crowd gathered around him but "he just said to get out by the end of the weekend. He said they couldn't afford to run the place anymore and we all had to get out. He said one of the furnaces had broke and they couldn't afford to fix it. One of the guys there is a burner mechanic and he offered to go down and look at it but the manager just told him to mind his own business."

On Sunday they turned off the heat and came around again, threatening to turn off the water. Beverly said she had two friends in the building. One of the women had a five-month old baby, the other a nine-month old. "What are they supposed to do with no heat and maybe no water? Sure--we all know what they're doing is illegal. Some people are talking about taking it to the tenancies board but I've been out looking for a new place too--since Saturday. I need a place to settle in before I go into labour. It's really hard looking for a place. It's hard to get around."

"The landlord refuses to give me back my $100.00 damage deposit. A hundred dollars may not be much to him but it's an awful lot to me. I found one place in Spryfield for $230.00 a month but they're not sure they'll take anyone on Welfare."

Beverly is scared, tired and angry. She is scared about the possibility of losing custody of the baby because she has no place to go, no way to prove she will be a good parent. She is angry because, while nine months pregnant, she must be out looking for a place she can afford to live in, and because her landlord won't give her damage deposit.

"I'm going back there tonight and until I find another place. How could anyone do something like this? What do they want anyway--all of us to be out on the street?"

MARY

"Mary" is a woman in her early thirties. She married in her late teens, did not finish high school, and has spent the years since her marriage taking care of her home and raising her four children. She has never worked outside of her home. She is not from the Halifax-Dartmouth area. Her Social Worker and the staff of a city transition house advised her to come to Halifax to get away from the threats and violence of her husband and set up a new life. She and her children have been staying at Bryony House for three months because they have not been able to find a place they could afford.

"How long have you been looking for a place to live?"

"About three months."

"What types of places have you been looking at? What have you been trying?"

"Let me tell you, I've been everywhere--everywhere in Halifax. I've tried Spryfield, Bedford, Sackville. There were some three-bedroom apartments but I have four kids and they tell me they won't take four kids in a three-bedroom, and most of the places the prices aren't right for social assistance. It's just hard--really, really hard."

"Are there any other rules you run into?"

"Yes, no children. A three-bedroom apartment with no children. Just who do they expect to live in there, I'd like to know?"

"So in those three months you've tried just about everything."

"I've seen me sitting down with the yellow pages and gone right through them."

"What type of help have you been getting?"

"There's a lady that comes in once a week who has a car. The Bryony House pays for her gas and we go all over the place--to Dartmouth, Spryfield, all over and if there's anything in the newspaper we just go look at it."

"Are there any other things, beyond the help you've been getting that, you feel would be of help in finding a place?"

"Not really, I just don't think anything else can be done. We've done everything and gone everywhere. It might be easier now to find an apartment though because I only have the one child. The three boys are with their father now and he has custody of them and I have her. I only really need a one-bedroom now and it should be easier. There's this girlfriend of mine and she's supposed to be moving out by the fourteenth and I think I got her place."

"Was giving the boys back to their father a hard decision for you?"

"Oh yes, really hard. They were always blamed for things around the Bryony House, and the kids were always coming to me complaining, saying Frankie did this or Andrew did that. They were always getting blamed for everything.

Lord knows they're no little angels, but they really didn't like this place. Anyway, their father came up to Halifax the day before we went to court. When they got into the car with their father they wouldn't get out of it. So I said O.K., they want to be with their father, so he can have custody of the boys, and I'll take custody of Jackie. But it is very hard. I miss them very much. I've talked to them on the telephone several times since they left. They're going to school and back with their friends and grandparents and they seem happy. I'm glad they're happy and I can see them anytime I want, although it's a long way to go to _____. They're only a telephone call away and I was thinking of going down to visit them at Christmas, spending Christmas with them and Jackie there. It's just going to be hard coming back and leaving them there. But I guess that's the way it's got to be--for now."

"I wonder about the situation with the kids, looking for the house, and being in the shelter. Do you feel it affecting you?"

"Oh sure."

"How?"

"There's been these women here and we've been here so long. Three months together and now all the rest are leaving. There's only I and another lady who have been here a long time. All the rest are gone. It's kind of hard now,

cause all the new ones coming in, you don't really know them. You got to get used to it all over again. But you meet new friends. I didn't know anyone in Halifax and now I know all these women. I go to visit them at their places and stay in contact."

"Soon they'll be able to come and visit me at my place and that will feel pretty good. But it's a little bit scary. I never been out on my own before--you know, alone. I've been married for 11 years and it's scary."

"Was looking for a place a totally new experience for you?"

"Oh, yes."

"You've never had to do that before?"

"No, never, and it was so hard when they'd say 'NO' or 'we'll call you' and they never did. Or they just don't take children. You get so frustrated after a while. Just so damn mad. But I guess they're the breaks. I guess?"

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The researcher found that there are:

1. Large numbers of women are contacting service agencies because they cannot find a permanent place to live.
2. In an average month of 1982, the thirteen agencies reported between 66 and 93 contacts from women who were evaluated as being in such severe housing crisis as to be considered "homeless".
3. These figures represent only the women who contacted the 13 agencies interviewed; it is assumed that other agencies receive additional contacts, and that more people never contact agencies.
4. Of the 66 to 93 contacts per month, 70% involved women with one or more children in their care, identifying them as one group who are facing most severe difficulties in housing mother-led families.
5. A large number of women (73.5%) attempt to meet their housing needs by temporarily doubling up with family or friends. This often results in serious over-crowding, conflicts with landlords, and internal family and social strife.
6. All agencies reported a lack of services to assist women with children who were in need of emergency shelter. The agencies which do provide emergency shelter in metro could not accommodate children; all agencies reported referrals to other agencies, who, in turn referred clients on again in a circular system that ultimately could not provide a shelter for the night. The only direct emergency housing available was temporary placement in downtown hotels through city social services.

7. The large numbers of women contacting the agencies coupled with the lack of resources to deal with housing crisis, clearly indicate the need for an emergency shelter in the metro area. Ninety-two percent (92%) of the agencies interviewed in the study indicated that establishing an emergency shelter for women and children is an essential priority.
8. From the study of other shelters across Canada, it was learned that a combination of government grants and private fund-raising is the basis of funding for the shelters. This would likely be the case in the Halifax/Dartmouth area. In order to establish an emergency shelter, support from all three levels of government would be essential.
9. The eleven Canadian shelters emphasized the importance of addressing other problems women bring to the shelter, specifically employment, financial, social assistance advocacy, legal, and childcare difficulties. All shelters interviewed attempted to deal with these issues through a combination of trained staff and a system of referrals to other social agencies.
10. The primary function of an emergency shelter is to provide safe, clean shelter for women and their children, and to assist in making the transition to permanent housing as quickly and easily as possible.
11. The cross-Canada survey showed that the numbers of women the shelter could assist depended directly on the initial number of beds in the facility and the length of time it took the women to find permanent housing (i.e. their length of stay at the emergency facility).

CONCLUSION

The main issues of funding, facilities and services outlined by the Canadian shelters will be the main topics for discussion of an emergency shelter in Halifax/Dartmouth metropolitan area. The information gathered from those other shelters will go a long way in making the initiation of a shelter here possible, quick, efficient, and effective.

While this study focused on the numbers of women contacting metro area agencies with serious housing needs, and on whether the nature and numbers of these women indicated a need for establishing an emergency shelter, it was beyond the scope of this study to establish why these women face severe housing problems. Establishing an emergency shelter will help alleviate the suffering which lack of shelter can bring on a family, but it does not directly redress the causative factors in housing problems.

In interviewing workers in service agencies and women in housing crisis, several topics were constantly discussed. These include:

- lack of affordable housing within social assistance scales and for working poor.
- discrimination against renting to social assistance clients (or only renting to those employed).
- growing numbers of apartments not accepting children or restricting the numbers of children.
- requiring income testing to base rent on a percentage of income.
- the general lack of rental housing, forcing low income people to compete with others for an already scarce commodity.

Until these factors within our community are addressed and dealt with, there will continue to be a need to deal with the resulting displacement of low income, specifically mother-led families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

During the course of this study the Women's Emergency Housing Coalition became increasingly aware of the numbers of women making contact with metro agencies because of housing crisis, more aware of the need felt by these agencies to have more resources to deal with women's housing difficulties, and more aware of the types of services being offered in other Canadian centres. Based on this information, as outlined in this study, the Women's Emergency Housing Coalition makes the following recommendations:

1. That immediate action, to provide emergency shelter for women and children in the Metropolitan Halifax-Dartmouth area, be supported by county, city and provincial governments.
2. That the shelter contain NO LESS than 35 subsidized beds, and provide some child-care, food services and assistance in locating permanent housing.
3. That a permanent [1] housing service be established to assist low-income people in housing crisis and that the primary focus group for this assistance be single parent women.
4. That all three governments take a more active role in providing good quality housing, at cost, to low income families, with specific assistance to mother-led families.
5. That legislative change be made to this province's Human Rights Act to prevent discrimination by landlords towards people on social assistance, single parents and families with children.

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1. Three-month trial program is being operated February - April, 1983 by Halifax Social Planning.

APPENDIX 1 -- Letter and questionaire to Cross-Canada Resource Centres.

Dear

The Women's Housing Coalition is an informal organization composed of representatives from agencies who deal with women and families in housing crisis. The members of the Women's Housing Coalition came together because they felt there was a need for emergency shelter for women and families in the Halifax/Dartmouth metropolitan area.

The coalition is undertaking over this summer a project looking into the need for emergency shelter for women and families. There is a strong feeling that it is time to carefully examine and document the scope and nature of the problem. The goals of our project are a) to determine the extent, type and kind of people involved in the need for emergency housing with emphasis on women and single parents (b) assess contributing factors to make preliminary forecasts of the duration of the need (c) determine solutions and direction to move to provide shelter.

In order to be most effective in our use of research time and in analyzing possible directions we are asking your assistance with this project. To find out what emergency shelters are available in your community, who they serve and how they operate we would ask you to complete the following questionnaire and return it to us as quickly as possible.

We realize that not all the questions may relate to your specific situation or the type of service your group provides to women. However, any information or brochures you could supply on women's emergency housing needs in your community and the services available would be of assistance to the study and the possibility of obtaining an emergency shelter in the metropolitan Halifax/Dartmouth area.

Thank you for your time and efforts involved in assisting our study. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Cathy Mellett
Researcher
Halifax Women's Housing Coaltion

HALIFAX WOMEN'S HOUSING COALITION

(A) What type of services does your resource centre provide?

- ☐ Referral service
- ☐ Abortion information
- ☐ Counselling service
- ☐ Support groups
- ☐ Drop-in
- ☐ Housing information
- ☐ Employment counselling
- ☐ Rape crisis centre/line
- ☐ Library
- ☐ Others, specify _____

(B) How many calls related to housing do you receive from women in an average month? _____

What proportion of the housing calls would you estimate are emergency calls?

% emergency_____

(C) Does your community have emergency shelter facilities for women?

- ☐ Yes (specify - please list names, addresses on reverse side)
- ☐ No

(D) What type of clients do they serve? (check more than one where appropriate)

- ☐ only battered women
- ☐ women with children
- ☐ single women

(E) Do you refer women to other agencies? ☐ Yes ☐ No

- If Yes where do you refer them? (specify)_____

(F) Do you follow up on the initial contact? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(G) What do you consider to be the most frequent/significant problems presented by the women who contact you with housing concerns? _____

_____

_____

_____

(H) At the present time are there enough resources to meet emergency shelter needs?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

(Please specify)_____

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

Names and addresses of emergency shelters in your area:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

COMMENTS:

APPENDIX 2 --Questionaire sent to 15 Shelters across Canada

HALIFAX WOMEN'S HOUSING COALITION

(A) How many women can the shelter accommodate?

_____ single women

_____ women with children

Do you take men? ☐Yes ☐No

(B) How many women use the shelter in an average month? _____

What is the average stay? _____

Do you have to turn women away? ☐Yes ☐No How many? _____

(C) Is there a season or time of the year when demand is greatest?

☐can't detect seasonal effect _____greatest demand

(D) What type of building is the shelter located in?

☐renovated house
☐renovated apartment complex
☐new construction
☐part of a larger complex
☐row houses
☐other, specify _____

(E) How is the shelter funded? (check more than one if appropriate)

☐per diem rate $_____
☐annual grant/private $_____
☐annual grant/govn't $_____
☐daily charge per room $_____
☐private fund raising $_____
☐United Way funds $_____
☐trust fund $_____
☐other, specify _____

(F) Is there a staff? ☐Yes ☐No

How is it staffed?

☐volunteer/full time
☐volunteer/part time
☐paid/full time
☐paid/part time
☐staff on call

(G) Is the shelter open 24 hours for emergencies? ☐Yes ☐No

What are the operating hours? _____

(H) What other types of problems (other than immediate housing) do women present to you?

☐employment
☐mental health
☐social assistance advocacy
☐child care
☐marital
☐assertiveness
☐legal
☐others, specify _____

APPENDIX 2 (continued)

(I) Does the shelter have immediate resources to deal with these other problems presented by the women? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Specify _____

(J) What other groups/agencies are used to provide support services?

Specify _____

(K) Are the support services adequate for the needs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(L) Where do women go if you can't accommodate them? _____

Is there another shelter? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name and address _____

_____

(M) At the present time what are the most significant problems presented by the needs of the women you are in contact with?

_____

_____

_____

_____

COMMENTS:

HALIFAX WOMEN'S HOUSING COALITION
1225 Barrington Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 1Y2
Phone: 429-4063

APPENDIX 3 -- Covering letter and Questionaire sent to 13 agencies in Halifax-Dartmouth

Dear

The Women's Housing Coalition is an informal organization composed of representatives from agencies who deal with women and children in housing crisis. The members of tlhe Women's Housing Coalition came together because they felt there was a need for emergency shelter for women and children in the Halifax area. We have appreciated the work and input of your organization.

Over the next ten weeks the coalition is undertaking research funded by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, to:

a) determine the type and numbers of people involved in need for emergency housing with emphasis on women and single parents.

b) assess the duration of the need.

c) determine solutions and directions in the provision of a shelter

To assist with compiling information on Women's housing needs in Halifax/Dartmouth we would like to set up an interview with a representative of your agency. The coalition's researcher, Cathy Mellett, will be contact with you in the next week to set up a time for such an appointment.

Thank you for your time and co-operation;

(for) Halifax Women's Housing Coalition

APPENDIX 3 (continued)

AGENCY QUESTIONAIRE

From: Halifax Women's Housing Coalition
1225 Barrington, St.
Halifax NS

Researcher: Cathy Mellett
Ph. 426-4063

Date:
Agency:
Interviewee:
Phone # where you can be reached:

SECTION I

1) What percentage of your clients are women 16 years of age and over?

2) What percentage of your women clients are:

ages 16-20 _____ ages 31-40 _____
ages 21-25 _____ ages 41-60 _____
ages 26-30 _____ ages 61 and over _____

3) In your opinion has the housing situation worsened for women:

in the past six (6) months? YES NO
in the last year? YES NO
in the last two (2) years? YES NO

(or) question not applicable - can detect no change _____

4) What resources does your agency have to deal with the housing problems of these women? (please specify)

5) In what ways do you see the lack of housing effecting women's lives? (for example: physical health, mental health, safety, family stress, job, education etc.) PLEASE GIVE EXAMPLES

6) In addition to housing needs what other needs do you perceive women as having? PLEASE SPECIFY AND RANK IN PRIORITY

SECTION II

7) What percentage of the women your agency serves has serious housing (shelter) problems? _____ represents approximately how many in an average month #_____

[For the purposes of this survey "serious housing problems" means]
A) their accomodations have such poor physical standards as to endanger health or safety.
B) their accomodations have such poor social standards as to be deemed dangerous to physical or mental health ie: overcrowding, physical violence, incest, abuse etc.

8) What percentage of these women would you consider to be homeless? %_____ represents in a given month #_____

[For the purposes of this survey "Homeless women" are:]
A) women living in any temporary accomodation such as shelters, hotel/motels, or hostels.
B) women living in sharing situations with friends or relatives ie: doubling-up

9) In what percentage of the serious housing problems (combine #7 and #8) are children involved?

10) To what agencies or resource groups do you refer women with emergency housing problems? SPECIFY

11) Do you do follow-up to housing referals? Yes No

[if answer is YES] SPECIFY how follow-up is done?

SECTION III

12) Does your agency consider establishing an emergency shelter for women and children a priority? Yes No

[if answer YES] what level of priority would you give its establishment?

essential immediately	____	a future service	____
essential	____	a long term goal	____
important	____	other (specify)	____

13) If an emergency shelter was established what effects would it have on your ability to provide services to your women clients?

14) If an emergency shelter was established what resources could your agency provide?

15) What types of services do you see the shelter providing?

16) In what area of the city would you prefer an emergency shelter to be established? PLEASE SPECIFY WHY

17) What do you think establishing an emergency shelter for women and children could accomplish?

SECTION IV

In order to collect accurate statistical information could I leave with you a short housing check list to enable you and your agency to record housing requests/problems for the four week period STARTING Sept. _____ through _____.

I will collect both the questionaire and sheets in person.
Record only those housing requests made by women

If you have any questions or difficulties please feel free to contact me at 429-4063 during office hours.

Thank you for your time and co-operation.

"APPENDIX 4"

Time Sheet: _____ to _____

Record all calls received from Women concerning Housing Problems

DATE	Women's Household Organization: Married ♀	Single ♀	Single Parent ♀	Number & age of children	Specific Housing Concern (if eviction explain why)	Your agencies suggestion and/or referals	Clients suggestions and/or solutions

APPENDIX 4 -- Indepth agency contact form for the study period Sept 13-Oct 31 1982

APPENDIX 5 --Background sheet and interview questions for Phase 3 of the study (interviews with homeless women.

QUESTIONAIRE: CODE:

1. Age _____

2. EDUCATION AND/OR TRAINING (circle highest grade completed)

elementary school gr. 3 4 5 6 7 8

high school gr. 9 10 11 12

technical or training courses (please specify) _____

University degree (please specify) undergraduate course _____

graduate course _____

3. What is your source of income?

☐ Social Assistance

☐ municipal

☐ provincial

☐ Employment

☐ part-time

☐ full time

☐ Unemployment insurance

☐ Pension (please specify) _____

☐ Other sources (please specify)

_____

_____

4. Do you have any children? YES NO

Do they live with you? YES NO

CHILD'S AGE	GRADE
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

APPENDIX 5 (continued)

5. In what area (s) of the province have you lived in the last two years?

Halifax Dartmouth Halifax County Other_____
(specify)

6. How many times have you moved in the last two years? (circle appropriate answer)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 or more

7. If you where in need of support who would be the first person (people) you would contact?

spouse family friend social worker minister/priest

other (please specify) _____

APPENDIX 5 (continued)

INTERVIEW WITH HOMELESS WOMEN --Questions to be led by interveiwer

How long have you been looking for a place to live?

What were the circumstances around your not having a place to live?
evicted? left your family? divorce? moved in from outside the city? apartment too expensive? just couldn't find a place?

What things have you tried in trying to find a place?
newspaper? phoning? going around to see places? (what part of the city or outside the city) social worker? others?

Have you run into any blocks in your way of finding a place to live? things that are making it hard for you to find a place to live? (what are they)

What have you been doing in the mean time? Where are you living?

How is this situation? Do you find it effecting you in any way? (how?)

Do you have any children?

Are they staying with you now?
(if the answer is Yes)
Do you find the situation effecting them in any way? (in what ways?)
(If the answer is No)
Could you tell me a little bit more about your children, where they are now?

What do you see happening from here? Do you know where you are going tonight?

Is there anything that would make your looking for a place to live easier for you?
more money? Daycare for the kids? a housing service? an emergency shelter? someone to help drive you around to the various places? anything else?

What further action are you going to take? Do you have any plans from here?

POOR

QUALITY

ORIGINAL